

**From:** Seneca, Roy [Seneca.Roy@epa.gov]  
**Sent:** 4/4/2019 11:01:17 AM  
**To:** Werner, Lora [Werner.Lora@epa.gov]; lkw9@cdc.gov; kvm4@cdc.gov; Ferrell, Mark [Ferrell.Mark@epa.gov]; Koffi, LaRonda [Koffi.LaRonda@epa.gov]; Rogers, Rick [rogers.rick@epa.gov]; Sternberg, David [Sternberg.David@epa.gov]; Damm, Thomas [Damm.Thomas@epa.gov]; Crumlish, Karen [Crumlish.Karen@epa.gov]  
**Subject:** Martinsburg Journal (4-4) ATSDR outlines process for exposure assessment in Martinsburg

[https://www.journal-news.net/journal-news/atsdr-outlines-process-for-exposure-assessment-in-martinsburg/article\\_7bfeae66-4dea-54a8-93ee-a84a5211dbdc.html](https://www.journal-news.net/journal-news/atsdr-outlines-process-for-exposure-assessment-in-martinsburg/article_7bfeae66-4dea-54a8-93ee-a84a5211dbdc.html)

## ATSDR outlines process for exposure assessment in Martinsburg

By Matt Welch [mwelch@journal-news.net](mailto:mwelch@journal-news.net)  
April 4, 2019

MARTINSBURG — The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has outlined its process for an upcoming exposure assessment scheduled to take place in Martinsburg.

The Center for Disease Control and the ATSDR will begin work on eight separate locations across the United States this year and will complete the exposure assessments in 2020 using a “staged approach.”

To determine the assessment sites, the CDC and ATSDR identified communities near current or former military bases and that are known to have had contact with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, in their drinking water.

“From these communities, a random selection of households impacted by PFAS in their drinking water will be identified,” the ATSDR Office of Communications wrote in an email to The Journal. “Individuals in randomly selected households will be eligible to participate if they are 3 years of age or older, have lived in the community for at least one year, and do not have a bleeding disorder or are not anemic.”

Those exposed to PFAS during their work — such as firefighters, active duty military and veterans — will be able to participate if their household is randomly selected, the ATSDR said.

Representative sampling will be used to identify and include participants for the assessment.

“This means that participants will be chosen at random and that people cannot simply volunteer,” the ATSDR said. “The advantage of this sampling strategy is that results from participants can give information about community-level exposure. If CDC/ATSDR were to accept volunteers, results could not be used to estimate exposure across a community.”

Randomly selected individuals will receive a letter in the mail from the CDC/ATSDR explaining the assessment and registration process and will also receive a phone call from a representative who can answer questions and register them if they are interested in participating.

The ATSDR advised there is no compensation for participating in the assessment.

“In order to ensure that a sufficient number of participants are included in each exposure assessment to allow for generalizable conclusions about the impacted community, a target for the number of participants in each exposure assessment will be set,” the ATSDR said. “We expect this number to be approximately 400 people. However, each exposure assessment will proceed regardless of whether this target number of participants is obtained.”

According to the ATSDR website, “an exposure assessment is a way to look at whether people in a community might have been exposed to a certain type of substance in their environment. People are tested to see whether they have been exposed and answer questions to help identify possible sources. Using this information, public health professionals provide guidance to help people reduce or stop exposure. An exposure assessment does not look at what types of health problems the exposure might cause.

“The primary goal of these exposure assessments is to provide information to communities about levels of PFAS in their bodies. This information will also be used to help inform future studies evaluating the impact of PFAS exposure on human health. People in each of these communities will be randomly selected to participate in these exposure assessments.”

The assessment area locally will be near Shepherd Field, or the 167th Air National Guard base, which has been noted as the source for water contamination discovered at the Big Springs Water Plant in 2016.

Perfluorooctanoic acid — known as PFOA — and perfluorooctane sulfonate — known as PFOS — were found in the water at Big Springs, and the plant was shut down around May 19, 2016.